

Driver Education Study



Completed November 2010

Office of State Budget and Management

Objectives

1. Examine the current process used by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to distribute funds to local school agencies (LEAs) and reverting unused funds
2. Determine the most appropriate funding sources to support the Program
3. Collect data on the number of students served and the outcomes by the Program
4. Identify ways to improve services, reduce cost, and eliminate duplication
5. Work with the DPI to establish performance measures for the program to determine the program's effectiveness.

Office of State Budget and Management
Driver Education Program Study

Methodology

- Reviewed North Carolina General Statutes and Administrative Codes applicable to the Driver Education Program
- Identified the mission, goals, and objectives of the Program within DPI, the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV),
- Determined the extent of coordination and collaboration between and among each of these agencies
- Reviewed various reports completed by the Legislative Service's Program Evaluation and Fiscal Research Divisions and various national organizations
- Interviewed employees from DPI, DOT, DMV, and selected LEAs that are responsible for some aspects of the Driver Education Program as well as representatives from national driver education organizations
- Surveyed all LEAs relative to their individual driver education programs and analyzed the results of the survey responses

Objective 1: Funding Process

- DOT Highway Fund supports the Drivers Education Program
- DPI withholds \$15,000 for the cost of printing and distributing the Driver Eligibility Certificates
- Distributed to LEA based on average 9th grade daily membership
- Funding based on FY 2008, FY 2009 and FY 2010
 - Average annual appropriation \$33.5 million
 - Average appropriation per eligible student \$243
 - Average annual reversion \$1.8 million

Objective 1: Funding Process (continued)

Four Program Types

- In-House
 - 52 programs and average cost \$323 per student
- Contracted
 - 21 programs and average cost \$265 per student
- Contractor provides all instruction and LEA provides vehicle and supplies
 - 12 programs and average cost \$354 per student
- Contractor and LEA share on-the-road and classroom instruction
 - 9 programs and average cost \$328 per student

Objective 2: Other Funding Sources

- 8 States (16%) fully fund the Program
 - Highway Funds only North Carolina
 - General funds
 - Dedicated Revenue Source, Fee and Assessments
- 10 States(20%) partially fund the Program
 - Local governments
 - Family fee
- 32 States (64%) do not fund the Program

Office of State Budget and Management
Driver Education Program Study

Objective 2: Other Funding Sources (continued)

Optional Revenue Source	Numbers FY2010	Fee	Revenue Generated
Vehicle License Plates Fee	8,411,240	\$5.00	\$42,056,200
Driver Licenses Fee	2,489,481	\$5.00	\$12,447,405
Vehicle Insurance Policy Surcharge	3,000,000 ^a	\$20.00	\$60,000,000
Vehicles Insured Fee	8,411,240	\$5.00	\$42,056,200
Family Assessment	138,212 ^b	\$50.00	\$6,910,600
Local Government Assessment	138,212 ^b	\$50.00	\$6,910,600
a Estimated number of policies			
b Average daily membership of ninth grade students for fiscal year 2010			

Objective 3: Students Served and Program Outcome

- Student Served
 - 86% of eligible students participate in the Program

- Program Outcome
 - 90% of student that participate successfully complete the Program
 - Based on 20 LEA
 - 97% of students participating in the Program successfully obtain a learner's permit

Objective 4: Program Improvements

- Oversight and Guidance Needed
 - Limited Statewide management and oversight
 - Program requirements are from 1949
- Improve Inconsistencies
 - Lack of standard curriculum
 - 59 LEA – DMV Drivers License Manual
 - 21 LEA – American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association
 - 16 LEA – In-house developed
 - 15 LEA – Prentice Hall's Drive Right
 - 11 LEA – Vendor developed
 - 8 LEA – Other

Objective 4: Program Improvements (continued)

- ☐ Inconsistent Instructor requirements
 - Commercial Driving Schools require 80 of initial training and on average 16 hours of continuing education annually
 - LEA Staff have not requirements
- Other Improvements
 - ☐ Use of Technology
 - ☐ More parental involvement
 - ☐ Coordination with DMV, DPI and LEA

Objective 5: Program Performance Measures

- Good measure are difficult to identify
- Accidents and citations are not a valid measure since teens lack maturity and driving experience.
- Students DMV written and road tests results

Recommendation

- A full-time Program Coordinator position be created within DPI to manage and oversee the State's Driver Education Program. The person in this position will be responsible for coordinating with the LEAs, DMV, DOT, and national driver education organizations. The positions should be funded out of the driver education funds.
- The General Assembly consider funding the Program with one or more of the fee and assessment revenue sources identified in the report.
- DPI adjust its funding allocation process to factor in the number of students that enrolled in driver education courses in previous years and also the amounts of driver education funds that are unspent from previous years.

Recommendation (continued)

- The Driver Education Curriculum Workgroup use one of the nationally recognized driver education curriculums or components of these curriculums in developing the new standardized curriculum. The Workgroup also consider expanding the number of classroom and behind the wheel hours and incorporate new technologies, such as interactive computer programs, videos, computerized presentations, on-line and distance learning instructions, and simulation technology in the new curriculum.
- DPI collaborate with DMV to establish a driver education instructor certification process that establishes minimum education and re-certifications requirements for all driver education instructors. Require the recertification to be based on the continuing education credits that DMV requires of commercial driving school instructors. DPI allow current driving education instructors who do not have the required credentials five years to upgrade their driver education credentials.

Recommendation (continued)

- DPI make parental involvement a requirement of the State's Program and a condition of a student's enrollment and completion of driver education training.
- DPI require all LEAs to collect and report student enrollment and completion data for their education programs as well as the number of students that obtain their level I learner's permits.
- DPI collaborate with DMV to obtain the driver license test results for all students that take driver education training and analyze the data to assess the quality of the LEA programs.
- DPI identify other performance measures that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall State Program and the individual LEAs programs.